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FORAGE NEWS

For more forage information, visit our UK Forage Extension Website at: <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage>

July 2013

Garry D. Lacefield and S. Ray Smith, Extension Forage Specialists • Christi Forsythe, Secretary

RUSSELL HACKLEY RECOGNIZED

Russell Hackley, Grayson County Beef-Forage producer was recognized for FORTY-ONE years of tall fescue variety research and demonstration work on his farm by the Grayson County Extension Service and the University of Kentucky. The award was presented at the Forage Field Day on his farm June 18. Congratulations Russell and THANK YOU for what you have/are/and will continue to do for forages.

34TH KENTUCKY ALFALFA CONFERENCE TO BE IN BOWLING GREEN

The 34th Kentucky Alfalfa Conference will be held at the WKU Expo Center February 20, 2014. The conference will feature excellent speakers covering the latest-practical information on alfalfa establishment-production-harvesting-marketing. In addition, we will present our annual alfalfa awards and hay quality awards. More details to follow, but for now mark February 20, 2014 on your calendar and plan to attend this our 34th Alfalfa Conference.

SURVEY SHOWS SLIGHT INCREASE IN HAY ACRES

Results from a recent Hay & Forage Grower Magazine survey of hay producers showed a 2.2 percent increase in hay acres over 2012. More than half of those surveyed 57% are planning to grow the same number of acres as last year, 14% will decrease acres and 28% to increase the number of acres grown this year. Of the 400 growers who will/have expanded, 42% indicated they needed more feed for their livestock and 41% said they were increasing acreage because of hay demand and prices. Over 25% of this group seeded new acres as a normal part of their crop rotation. (SOURCE: Hay & Forage Grower Magazine, May 2013)

HAY MOISTURE: HOW DRY IS DRY ENOUGH?

Summary of heating during hay storage, including recommended actions at various hay temperatures, what is causing the temperature increase, and what is happening as a result of the heat. (SOURCE: Dr. Dennis Hancock, University of Georgia)

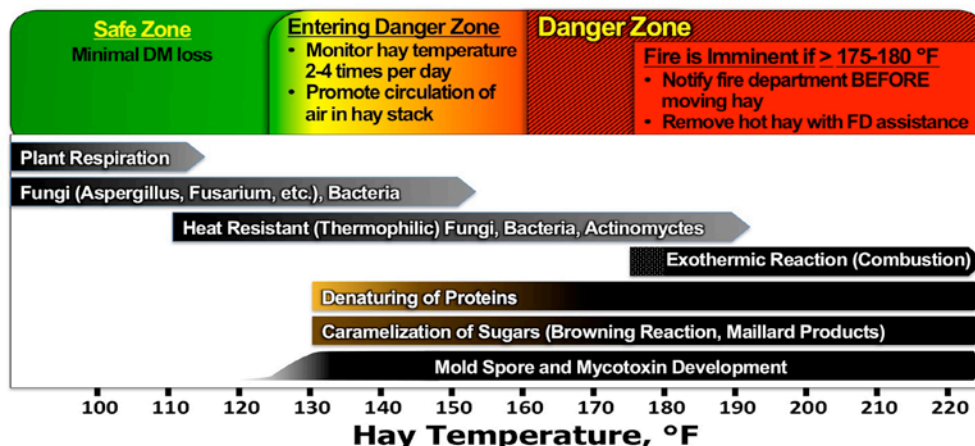
KENTUCKY FORAGE FIELD DAY IN OLDHAM COUNTY

The Annual KFGC Field Day will be held August 1 in Oldham County. Rivercrest Farm, 1914 Mayo Lane, Prospect, Ky. Will host this annual event. We greatly appreciate Oldham County Agricultural Agent Traci Missun and Caldwell Willig and Danny Jacobs for organizing and hosting this event. The program will begin at 3:00 with registration and an opportunity to visit exhibits. The program will begin at 3:30 with a welcome and farm overview followed by a tour featuring five stops with speakers concerning: warm season grasses, forage tips for pasture poultry production, pasture seeding and establishment methods, opportunities with Eastern Gamagrass and hay quality and testing. The tour will conclude at six with dinner and a presentation on making forages work on your farm. For complete program including directions to the farm, see our website www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage. For more information contact the Oldham County Extension Office (502-222-9453) or e-mail traci.missun@uky.edu.

SABBATICAL FOR RAY SMITH

Universities allow professors to take a sabbatical research/study leave on a periodic basis. This allows faculty to take a break from day to day responsibilities and learn new things that will help the University and students and in the case of extension, also help county agents and farmers across KY. Our own Ray Smith has been approved for just such a sabbatical leave from July 1 to Dec 31 of this year. We are fortunate in Kentucky to have other forage professionals to cover Ray's duties while he's away. While Ray is on sabbatical he will be determining the common characteristics of effective extension programs around the world and use this information to improve extension at the University of Kentucky. The first 3 months of sabbatical will be in the Pacific NW, then New Zealand, and then Australia. While in Australia Ray will also be making arrangements for an agricultural tour (Sept 7 - 20) for a group of KY county agents and producers. This group will also attend and participate in the International Grassland Congress in Sydney. Look for updates on what this group learns in Forage News this fall and Ray will also send regular updates of what he is learning.

While Ray is away, contact Garry Lacefield for general forage questions, Tom Keene for questions related to biomass production and Krista Cotten for questions on forages for horse pasture.



MAKE YOUR HAYFIELD A SAFE PLACE TO WORK

Use this checklist to find out how

Putting safety at the forefront can lead to a more efficient hay-harvesting season, says Jim Maass, safety manager for [Virginia Farm Bureau](http://www.virginiafarmbureau.org).

"Take the time now to check your equipment and fix it, so you're not stuck in the field fixing it while trying to hurry and beat the weather," he says.

Here's Maass' safety checklist:

- Check bearings, hydraulic hoses, tires and signal lights.
- Make sure cutter blades, teeth or bars are not bent or cracked.
- Keep shear bolts for repairs handy.

Don't use regular bolts in place of shear bolts.

- Keep a charged water or foam fire extinguisher on all hay equipment and an ABC-type extinguisher inside work buildings.
- Relay safety information to all employees.
- Shut equipment down before working on it.
- Double check that all safety features – power take-off shields, safety chains and chain guards – are in place along with slow-moving vehicle emblems and reflective tape.
- Before loading hay, check all straps and chains for frays, breaks and tears. Replace them if they're damaged.
- Strap round bales in place so they will not roll off a wagon or trailer.
- Check that the points to which you tie or connect straps are strong enough to support the load if it shifts.
- After driving a few miles, check straps or chains to make sure they haven't loosened.

(SOURCE: Hay & Forage Grower, May 21, 2013)

PREPARE FOR LATE SUMMER – FALL SEEDINGS

If your plans call for a new forage seeding of cool-season grasses (tall fescue, orchardgrass, timothy, bluegrass) alfalfa, clover or winter annuals it's not too early to be making decisions of what variety or varieties to plant. The University of Kentucky, under the leadership of Mr. Gene Olson, does an excellent job of testing many varieties at multiple locations. Results for 2012 and previous years are available through your County Extension Agent for Agriculture and on our website at: <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/ForageVarietyTrials2.htm> Reports include: Alfalfa, red and white clover, orchardgrass, annual and perennial ryegrass, tall fescue, brome grass, Timothy, summer annuals, Kentucky Bluegrass, and corn for silage. In addition, variety trials using grazing annuals include: Alfalfa, red and white clover and cool-season grasses. Another relatively new addition to the reports include "Long-Term Summary of Kentucky Variety Trials". If you would like to see how a particular variety performs in other states, click on the link "Variety Trials" Other States".

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY ANYWAY?

Sustainability is a phrase that gets thrown around so frequently that there is little consideration about what the word really means. After all, who can be opposed to sustain- able agriculture?

Sustainability was famously described as *meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

The vision of sustainable agriculture is more philosophical than a well-defined goal. It certainly includes the stewardship of natural resources, financial security for farmers, and consideration of societal goals. However since there is no agreement on how to achieve these objectives, these terms can be twisted to meet personal agendas.

Many will agree that each person has an individual preference on how to balance current consumption with future enjoyment. Frequently we want things now, instead of waiting for a future reward. Some people are careful savers for the future, while others spend all that they earn. Achieving sustainability is a flexible goal that reflects individual priorities and incentives. There are also regional considerations that must be factored into sustainability objectives.

The unprecedented pressure on the global food supply to meet the growing population requires close examination of all our current practices. Our soil and water resources are under severe stress in some areas. Like all geologic resources, the supply of phosphate and potash is finite in the world. Although there is no risk of fertilizer shortage in the next centuries, consideration of appropriate conservation and recycling practices should always be in the forefront of their use. Modern food systems require the input of considerable energy. There are numerous changes that can be made to make our food supply more sustainable.

Some groups promote a return to organic fertilization practices, other voices suggest that agroecology or integrated nutrient management is the path towards sustainability. Being dogmatic about a single solution causes more conflict than progress. There is no single path towards achieving agricultural sustainability. Instead of arguing over which definition of agricultural sustainability is correct, let's get on with the task of using plant nutrients as efficiently and effectively as possible. (Excerpted from: Dr. Robert Mikkelsen, IPNI Western North American Program Director, Better Crops with Plant Food, Issue No. 2, 2013)

KENAF AS A FORAGE CROP

In recent weeks, we have gotten a number of questions about growing Kenaf as a forage crop. We do not have firsthand experience with this crop so we contacted Dr. Brian Baldwin from Mississippi State, the plant breeder of a Kenaf variety released in 2005 named Whitten. He related to us that kenaf is a sub-tropical plant related to okra and cotton that has been primarily used as a fiber crop to make rope, sacks, and even paper. Dr. Baldwin developed Whitten to have higher percentages of bast fiber or the inner pulpy fiber inside the stem that has the most value in the fiber market. Interestingly, kenaf leaves resemble marijuana, so Dr. Baldwin bred Whitten to have rounder leaves to avoid confusion on farms. When allowed to grow for an entire growing season for fiber in Mississippi plant height averaged 12-15 feet, with yields as high as 11 tons per acre, but more commonly 5 to 6 tons per acre. Full season kenaf has a very thick stalk, but at this stage it would have no value as a forage. Dr. Baldwin's group at Mississippi State looked at the potential of kenaf as a forage crop when cut or grazed at an immature state. They showed that cattle found it was palatable after an acclimation period. They showed that it ensiled well after chopping, but was very difficult to hay because of excessive leaf shatter.

DON'T LOSE HAY YIELDS TO WHEEL TRAFFIC

Avoid unnecessary trips, plant tolerant varieties

Growers should avoid excessive wheel traffic in alfalfa fields, which can reduce yields in later cuttings, says Dwane Miller, ag educator with Penn State University Extension.

Besides causing soil compaction, wheel traffic breaks off regrowing alfalfa stems, according to University of Wisconsin research. The study compared the effects of equipment on regrowing alfalfa from two days after harvest to five days after. For every day after a field was cut, wheel traffic caused up to 6% in yield losses during the next cutting.



Young alfalfa shoots can be vulnerable to wheel traffic, according to University of Wisconsin research.

"If traffic was delayed for four days after cutting, losses could exceed 20% on the next cutting," says Miller. Here's what he recommends may help:

- Planting traffic-tolerant varieties.
- Using small tractors when possible to reduce soil compaction. Don't use tractors larger than necessary for the job.
- Avoiding unnecessary trips across the field when mowing and conditioning in a single operation, driving loaded wagons/trucks off the field. collecting bales and driving on an alfalfa field when harvesting an adjacent field.
- Considering the use of larger harvesting equipment to minimize trips over the field. Larger equipment, however, can increase compaction, he notes.
- Avoiding using tractors with dual wheels.
- Harvesting as quickly as possible after cutting.
- If applying manure, spreading as soon as possible after harvest.

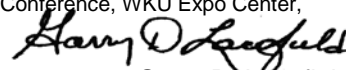
(SOURCE: Hay & Forage Grower, June 11, 2013)

UPCOMING EVENTS

AUG 1 KFGC Forage Field Day, Oldham County, Prospect, KY
OCT 10 Kentucky Grazing Conference, Fayette County Extension Office, Lexington

2014

JAN 12-14 AFGC Conference, Memphis, TN
JAN 13 AFGC Dow Pasture Symposium, Memphis, TN
JAN 17 Forages at KCA, Lexington, KY
FEB 20 34th Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, WKU Expo Center, Bowling Green



Garry D. Lacefield
Extension Forage Specialist
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